

Message Text

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R 100310Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3114

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 4484

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NP, IN

SUBJ: BIRENDRA'S MEETING WITH GANDHI

1. FOLLOWING IS WHAT WE HAVE GLEANED FROM VARIETY OF OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL SOURCES REGARDING THE STATE OF INDO-NEPALESE RELATIONS FOLLOWING MEETING BETWEEN THE KING AND MRS. GANDHI SEPTEMBER 30. SINCE MEETING TOOK PLACE WITHOUT PRESENCE OF ADVISORS, MUCH OF THIS INFORMATION IS PROBABLY SPECULATIVE, OR AT BEST, VERSION OF EVENTS WHICH PALACE HAS RELEASED TO LOWER LEVELS OF BUREAUCRACY.

2. BIRENDRA MET WITH MADAME GANDHI FOR OVER AN HOUR PRIVATELY. MOOD OF TALKS HAS BEEN DESCRIBED VARIOUSLY AS "CORDIAL AND PRODUCTIVE" (NEPALESE SOURCE) AND "FRANK AND REALISTIC" (INDIAN SOURCE). GON OFFICIALS PRESENT AT LUNCHEON FOLLOWING MEETING NOTED THAT BOTH KING AND GANDHI APPEARED PLEASED AND SAID THAT ATMOSPHERE WAS MARKEDLY IMPROVED OVER PREVIOUS MEETINGS.

3. MOST PERSONS AGREE THAT KING MADE GENUINE EFFORT TO BE CONCILIATORY AND THAT HE EXPRESSED HIS ORAL SUPPORT FOR MADAME GANDHI'S EMERGENCY MEASURES. ALTHOUGH SUBJECT OF SIKKIM WAS NOT RAISED BY EITHER SIDE, KING IS REPORTED TO HAVE "ACKNOWLEDGED" GOI LEAD IN INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS, PROVIDED INDIAN POSITIONS DID NOT AFFECT GON VITAL INTERESTS.

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DESPITE KING'S EFFORT TO SOLICIT SUPPORT FOR ZONE OF PEACE

PROPOSAL, GANDHI WOULD ONLY SAY THAT SUBJECT WAS UNDER REVIEW. IT APPEARED, HOWEVER, TO BE SOMEWHAT SUPERFLUOUS IN LIGHT OF INDO-NEPALESE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT. BOTH SIDES AGREED TO MOVE FORWARD ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY REGARDING HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS SUCH AS KARNALI.

4. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE INDIA AGREED TO INCREASE ITS LEVEL OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND WOULD INCREASE EXPORTS OF SUGAR, IRON AND STEEL AND COAL TO NEPAL.

5. BOTH SIDES CONFIRMED ARRANGEMENTS WITH VISIT TO KATHMANDU OF FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN, NOW SET FOR NOVEMBER, AT WHICH TIME FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE AIMED AT EASING INDIAN EXPORT POLICY TOWARD NEPAL.

6. COMMENT: WHILE WE HAVE NO REASON TO QUESTION REPORTED SUBSTANCE OF TALKS, ALL OF WHICH MAKES SENSE IN TERMS OF WHAT GON SEEKS FROM INDIA, WE REMAIN SOMEWHAT CHARY OF NEPALESE REPORT OF THE DEGREE OF SWEETNESS AND LIGHT. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS TO US THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE THEIR OWN REASONS FOR SEEKING AN IMPROVED ATMOSPHER IN BILATERAL RELATIONS AND BOTH ARE MAKING A GENUINE EFFORT TO OPEN A DIALOGUE, RATHER THAN TO LET PROBLEMS, INEVITABLE IN SUCH A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP, FETER. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION EMBASSY DELHI MAY OBTAIN ON KING'S VISIT. CARGO

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